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Pushing Northwestward. The Corwin Meets with a Disaster-The Rudder Smashed by Ice Floes-Getting Up a Sleigh Party-Landing on Kolintchin Islands, 6 P.M., June 2, 1881.

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## PUSHING NORTHWESTWARD.

The Corwin Meets With a Disaster—The Rudder Smashed by Ice Floes—Getting Up a Sleigh Party—Landing on Kolintchin Island.

STEAMER CORWIN (Near the edge of the Shore Ice, opposite Kolintchin Island), 6 P. M., June 2, 1881.

This has been an eventful day on board the Corwin. Since half-past 12 o'clock this morning we were so unfortunate as to break our rudder, and so fortunate as to land a party fully equipped, with interpreter, dog teams, and supplies of every kind, to search the coast to the westward for the crew of the Jeannette or any tidings concerning them.

### FOLLOWING THE SIBERIAN SHORE ICE.

After leaving Tapkan, 12 miles northwest of Cape Serdze, on the evening of the last day of May, we steamed along the coast to the westward, tracing the edge of the shore ice, which seemed to be from three to six miles wide. The weather was tranquil, though rather thick at times, and the water was like glass and as smooth as a mill-pond. About 4 P. M. yesterday we reached the end of the open lead that we had been following, 130 miles west of Cape Serdze, latitude  $68^{\circ} 10'$ , longitude  $176^{\circ} 48'$  west, having thus early in the season reached a point farther west than the Corwin was able to do any time last year. At this point the firm coast ice united with the great Polar pack, and as there was danger of its drifting south at any time and cutting us off, we made haste to the eastward, keeping as far off shore as possible, that we might be able to watch the movements of the pack. About 7 P. M. yesterday, the weather becoming thick, the engine was stopped and the vessel was allowed to proceed slowly under sail.

### A BROKEN RUDDER—DANGERS OF ARCTIC NAVIGATION.

Shortly after 1 o'clock this morning I was awakened by unusual sounds on deck, and after listening for a few minutes, concluded that we must be entangled in the edge of the pack and were unshipping the rudder for fear it might be carried away. Going on deck, I was surprised to see the broken rudder being hoisted, for 1



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had not been awakened by the blow. The oak shaft was broken completely off, and also all three of the pintles. It seems that about midnight, owing to the fog and snow, we got into a field of heavy masses of ice on the edge of the main pack, which, on account of a north wind that had commenced to blow, was now moving slowly southward, and while backing out of it, a moderate bump that chanced to take the rudder at the greatest disadvantage, broke it off without any appreciable strain. The situation was sufficiently grave and exciting—dark weather, the wind from the north and freshening every minute, and the vast polar pack pushing steadily shoreward. It was a cold, bleak, stormy morning, with a close sweeping fall of snow, that encumbered the deck and ropes and nearly blinded everybody when compelled to look to windward. Our 26 dogs made effective addition to the general uproar, howling as only Esquimo dogs can. The necessary orders, however, were being promptly given and obeyed. As soon as the broken rudder was secured on deck, four long spars were nailed and lashed firmly together, fastened astern and weighted to keep them in place at the right depth in the water. This made a capital jury rudder and was worked by ropes attached on either side and to the steam windlass. The whole was brought into complete working order in a few hours, nearly everybody ~~sailing~~ notwithstanding the blinding

rendering service

storm and peril, as if jury-rudder making under just these circumstances were an every-day employment. Then, finding everything worked well, we made our escape from the closing ice and set out for Plover Bay to repair damages.

#### AT KOLINTCHIN ISLAND.

About 4 P. M. the clouds lifting, we sighted Kolintchin Island, which our two Tchuchi natives hailed with joyful beaming eyes. They evidently were uneasy concerning the accident, and from being so long out of sight of land, a state of mind easily accounted for by the dangers attending their mode of life among the ice. The ice in front of the island seemed to be two or three miles wide and lavishly roughened with jammed angular hummocks. Captain Hooper was now very anxious to get his sledge party landed. Everything was ready to be put on shore as soon as a safe landing place should be discovered. The two Tchuchi were in the pilot house gazing wistfully at the gloomy snow-covered island as it loomed up in the gray, stormy sky with its jagged reach of ice in the foreground beaten by the waves.

#### PREPARING THE FIRST SLEIGH EXPEDITION.

The Captain directed Tchuchi Joe, the interpreter, to ask his companion, the dog driver, who was familiar with the condition of the ice on this part of the coast, whether this was a good point to land on. His answer, as interpreted by Joe, was: "He says it's good; it's pretty good," he says. "Then get ready, Mr. Herring, for your journey," ordered the Captain. "Here, Quartermaster, get the provisions on deck." "Lower the boats there." "Joe, harness the dogs." In a few minutes all was in readiness and in the boats. The party is: Mr. Herring, First Lieutenant, in charge; Mr. Reynolds, Second Lieutenant, a sailor and two Tchuchi. They have 26 dogs, with four sleds, and a light skin boat to cross rivers and any open water they may find in their way, and two months' provisions, etc. They were directed to search the coast as far to the westward as possible, interview the natives they met, explore the prominent portions of the coast for cairns and signals of any kind, and return to Tapkan, where we would meet them, while in the meantime we propose to cruise wherever, under existing conditions, we can best carry out the objects of the expedition.

#### LANDING THE SLEIGH PARTY.

The party and all their equipments were carried from the vessel to the ice in three boats, roped together at intervals of 25 or 30 feet, the life-boat leading with the party, clothing, provisions, etc. Then came the dinky, loaded nearly to the water's edge with the dogs, and one man to thrash them and keep some sort of order while they worried each other and raised an outrageous noise, on account of their uncomfortable, tumble-together condition. And last, the skin-boat, flying-light, with only the sleds aboard and one man to steer, the whole making a very extraordinary show.

#### MORE NATIVES.

Soon after leaving the vessel, while we were watching the tossing fleet from the pilot house and scanning the shore with reference to a landing-place, we noticed three dark objects on top of a hummock near the edge of the ice, and just back of them and to one side on a flat portion of the ice, a group of black dots. These proved to be three natives with their dog teams, who were out hunting seals, and had descried the ship with their sharp eyes and came forward to gaze. This was a glad discovery to us, and no doubt still more so to the party leaving the ship, as they were now sure of the passable state of the ice, and would have guides with local knowledge to conduct them to the land. When the dogs got upon the ice—their native heath—they rolled and raced about in exuberant sport. The rough pack was home sweet home.

After all were safely landed and our boats had returned, we went on our way, while the land party, busied about their sled packing and dogs, gradually faded in the snowy gloom.

It seems well this evening; no ice in sight to the northward, and the new rudder is working extremely well.

JOHN MUIR.